

## RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

## MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 11:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for not to exceed 5 minutes each. Under the previous order, the time between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m. shall be under the control of the Senator from North Dakota, Mr. DORGAN, or his designee.

The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

## THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, there will be an opportunity this morning for Members of the Senate to discuss the President's submission of his budget to the Congress yesterday.

The way the process works in our country is the President proposes a budget that contains his recommendations for spending priorities. And then the Congress deals with these recommendations in that way that Congress deems appropriate. The budget that the President proposes, and the budget that the Congress finalizes, reflect what we think the priorities are for our country.

It is certain that 100 years from now none of us will be here; 100 years from now we will be gone from this Earth. But if historians want to learn 100 years from now about who we were, and what we were, and what we felt was important to us, and what our priorities were, they could look at the Federal budget document and evaluate our spending priorities. What did we think was important? What did we invest in, in order to achieve a better future for ourselves or our country? And they could determine by our decisions about investment and spending what we held dear as a country.

This President has proposed a budget that is vastly changed from the budgets we have seen in recent years. When I came to the Congress in 1981, in the House of Representatives, a new President was assuming office here in town, President Ronald Reagan. He had a completely different vision of fiscal policy.

He was supported by an economic theory that suggested if you had very large tax cuts, you would still achieve larger amounts of revenue and you could actually balance the budget with large tax cuts. And so he proposed with his Office of Management and Budget guru, Mr. David Stockman, a series of budgets that proposed very significant tax cuts and a doubling of the defense budget.

And President Reagan's economist and others, particularly an economist

named Arthur Laffer, who developed a Laffer curve, said this would all work out OK. They said you can provide significant tax cuts, double defense spending, and it would all come out just fine.

In fact, that fiscal policy created a mountain of debt that began to choke this country. The President and Congress in combination embarked on a fiscal policy that was reckless. In fact, David Stockman, the chief strategist of it, said so in his book.

It took a long while to get through all of that, and even through the end of the 1980s and into the early 1990s the Federal budget deficit was climbing and climbing at an alarming rate.

President Clinton came to office in 1993 and said we are going to change that. And he presented the Congress in 1993 with a proposal to reduce the Federal budget deficit. As fiscal policy his proposal was tough, tough medicine.

And by one vote in the Senate and one vote in the House it passed. Some of my colleagues who voted for that are not here any longer because it was tough and controversial. But it put this country on the right road. Over a period of 5 years the budget deficit has come down, down, way down.

And some of my colleagues are unwilling to accept the fact that there is a cause-effect relationship between the actions you take to reduce this budget deficit and the results you get. But it is inevitable, if you look at the facts, to conclude that what this President and what this Congress did in 1993 to set this country on the right track has put us in the position today where we have a budget submitted to the Congress that wrestles that budget deficit to the ground and then says, as far as the eye can see in the years ahead, there is good news.

And the good news is that this economy is working. It's working better for the American people. I do not want to attribute it all to one person or one party. That is not the case. Last year we had a bipartisan budget agreement between Republicans and Democrats and that helps as well, and both parties ought to be credited for that.

But my point is I watched yesterday some people react to the President's budget submission, and it was the same cranky old tune you have heard from them every single year. It sounds like they have a permanent toothache. Nothing on Earth can make them satisfied or happy.

Let me see if I can help them out. Let me try to explain why the American people feel differently. Here is what makes the American people feel good about the direction we are heading.

The Federal budget deficit, as I said, has been down, down, way down now for 5 years in a row. And the deficit is almost nonexistent—not quite yet, but it will be.

Inflation is almost nonexistent. Inflation has come down, down, down. It is the lowest it's been since 1986. Housing starts are up substantially. In 1996

they totaled 1.47 million housing starts. That is the largest number of housing starts in this country since 1988. And what we know so far about 1997 tells us that the figures for all of last year will be even higher.

Mr. President, 14 million people are working now that were not working in 1993. Unemployment is down. I can recall when the Federal Reserve Board, that friend of mine, that institutional friend of mine, said if unemployment ever goes below 6 percent are we in for trouble; we are in for a huge wave of inflation. The Federal Reserve Board has been wrong, it has been consistently wrong about that. Unemployment is now at 4.7 percent, and inflation has not gone up, it has gone down.

Crime? The crime rate has gone down at the same time. This President said let's put 100,000 new police officers on the street. Let's put new cops on the street, on the beat. Guess what is happening. As our economy strengthens, and as more people are working, we have a lower crime rate. Since 1993, violent crime has dropped 16 percent. Robberies are down, assaults are down, the murder rate is down by over 20 percent, burglary is down. That is good news.

Welfare? In the last 4 years we have seen the largest decline in the welfare rolls in the history of this country. There are 2 million fewer people on welfare today than there were in August 1996, when we enacted welfare reform. I might say that this was a bipartisan accomplishment: Republicans and Democrats in the Congress joined to pass a welfare reform bill. I supported it as did many of my colleagues on both sides of the political aisle. A good economy plays a major role in this, but the welfare reform bill also set us on the right track.

Child support collections are up 50 percent after this Congress passed legislation cracking down on deadbeat dads who decide their children are not their responsibility and that the taxpayers should pay for them. The increase in collections is good news. Child support payments are up 50 percent.

Access to health care for millions of Americans? Because of last year's action, 5 million American children without health care will get health care.

Medicare? In the work that we have done to provide long-term stability for Medicare much, much more needs to be done, but we have done a great deal already.

I have more to say and I will in a bit, but I notice the minority leader, Senator DASCHLE, is on the floor. Let me yield whatever time Senator DASCHLE might use of the hour.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The distinguished Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. DASCHLE. I thank my colleague for his leadership and his usual eloquence. I want to associate myself with his remarks this morning. I appreciate very much his calling attention to the

extraordinary and very historic accomplishment that we mark this week as we begin the debate on the fiscal 1999 budget.

I have some charts here that I think probably tell the story as well as any three charts could. This first graph simply lays out our fiscal policy from 1980 through 2003, using the President's fiscal year 1999 budget proposal to project from 1999 to 2003. The portion in red notes our struggle with the deficit from 1980 all the way up until the present. The deficits during this period total \$3.1 trillion. Then in 1993 came the very controversial Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, which was enacted only after the Vice President cast the deciding vote. Passage of this act allowed us to make a dramatic reversal in our fiscal policy, generating savings that exceed the entire deficit that we have accumulated from 1980 through 1999. The green, or blue portion as it may appear on the screen, represents a total savings of \$4 trillion. It shows that prior to the passage of the 1993 budget bill, CBO was projecting that the deficit would explode from \$290 billion in 1992 to \$633 billion by the year 2003.

Instead, a wonderful thing happened as a result of courageous decisions made by Democratic Senators and Members of Congress—some who are not here today because they voted on that deficit. I will never forget that moment as long as I live. After much consultation with Senators on both sides of the aisle, but especially our side of the aisle, a majority came to the realization that this could be a historic vote. Indeed it was. That vote brought about a precipitous decline in the deficit, to the point where we now see a surplus for the first time in 30 years. That surplus is projected to be \$218 billion over the next 5 years. In 1969 I was a senior in college. I didn't really know, then, whether we had a surplus or a deficit. I really wasn't following it that closely. But I look back now and note that it was a surplus, albeit a small one. By the rarest of circumstances we had a set of economic conditions that allowed us to reach surplus that year. However, it was a fragile one and would not be repeated for 30 years. Now we are being told that the budget before us could achieve at least \$1 trillion surplus over the next 10 years. So this is not just a fleeting 1-year moment in time. Current economic analysis projects that it is very likely we could see budgetary surpluses for the next 10 years. If in the years ahead we practice the same fiscal responsibility we have demonstrated the last 5 years, we could see a surplus of \$1 trillion. In other words, we would not only achieve a \$4 trillion savings in projected deficits, we would add to that an additional \$1 trillion in surplus because of decisions we made in 1993 and again in 1997.

So no one should be surprised at the ceremony at the White House yesterday or with the extraordinary opti-

mism and excitement that many of us shared as a result of these tough decisions. We have all been in those rooms. We have all noted a change in discipline. We have all noted how difficult it is to say no. We have all noted that, were it not for tough decisions and the new discipline that we have been able to establish over the last 5 years, we would not be celebrating today. But, indeed we are, and this chart points out as well as any the reasons for that celebration.

This next chart is also quite educational and informative. The dotted line shows the average federal outlays as a share of gross domestic product over the course of the last 17 years, from 1980, when Ronald Reagan became President, through 1997, under President Clinton. The average outlay during this span has been 21.9 percent of gross domestic product. In the early 1980s we exceeded this average pretty substantially. The red line indicates what actually happened. In 1988 and 1989 we went below the average outlays and then during the Bush years we exceeded the average outlays. In 1993, upon passage of President Clinton's budget bill, those outlays dropped precipitously and have continued falling right to the present. We see a dramatic reduction. Never in 17 years have we seen anything close to the drop in outlays that have occurred in the last 5 years. So, as a percent of gross domestic product, the federal government is spending far less than we have ever spent in the last two decades.

Receipts have also gone up during this same period. We see that expenditures and receipts meet about in the middle. Receipts as a share of gross domestic product have averaged 18.5 percent over the period 1980 to 1997. This percent has gone up substantially in the last five years so that revenues and outlays meet in the middle to bring us that surplus. What is amazing is that even though average receipts are up, the amount of tax paid by the average American working family is down, the lowest it has been in 20 years. So, one might ask, why are receipts up? Receipts are up because people on Wall Street are making megamillions, the economy is stronger than it has been at any time in our history, and the explosion of economic vitality and growth has produced an economic engine that not only provides more after-tax income for working families and businesses and farms, but also for the governments. More governments today at the State and local level are declaring surpluses than at any other time. Why? Because the engine of this economy is as strong as it has ever been.

So, by showing fiscal discipline, by creating fiscal and monetary policy that meld so well, we have created an economic engine that has allowed this economy to grow, to bring in the receipts, even though the vast majority of middle-income families have actually seen a reduction in their taxes over the last 20 years. These outlays

have been reduced in large measure because we have been able to do something with government bureaucracy that we have not seen since John Kennedy was President: a lowering of the federal government's civilian employment. As depicted in this chart, we can see what has happened to Federal employment over the period of the last 30 years. When President Kennedy was in office, we had about 1.8 million employees working for the Federal Government. During the Johnson years that number shot up to over 2.3 million. It dropped in Nixon's time, went up a little bit in Carter's time, dropped somewhat in Reagan's time. But look what happened in President Clinton's time. The red portion of the chart shows the dramatic decline in civilian employment in the executive branch just in the last 5 years. It is once again at a level about where it was when President Kennedy was in office, when I was in 6th and 7th grade. So these outlays have gone down for many reasons, but they have gone down in large measure because we have the smallest Federal Government that we have had in more than 30 years.

We have had an effective Federal Government. In education, health care, health security, especially for Medicare recipients—in a lot of ways, even though our Government is smaller, our country and the Government is stronger. Now we are at the crux of some very serious policy questions. Perhaps the most important policy question is what do we do with the surplus. I think the President last week laid out the blueprint as clearly and convincingly as anything I have heard him discuss in the 5 years he has been President. This President has said, before we do anything else, let's recognize one thing. If we don't deal with Social Security soon in a meaningful way, by the time he and I and many of us so-called baby boomers retire, security, the fund may well be exhausted. Let's fix the Social Security problem, but until we do, let's ensure that we don't do anything with the surplus. In essence, we should pay down the debt as long as the Social Security problem remains unrepaired; so long as we don't have the confidence that Social Security will be available beyond the year 2030.

So I think the President is absolutely right. Let's solve Social Security, let's pay off some of the debt and whatever other things that we want to do. However, let's use the same fiscal discipline that we have used for the last 5 years to ensure that we provide good child care, good education, good health care, and a vital economy. We should pay for new investments and that's what the President's budget is doing. Every single thing in the President's budget is paid for, every penny of it.

So it's an exciting day. We celebrate success. We celebrate vitality in the economy the likes of which many of us have never seen in our lifetimes. We celebrate and perhaps look back with some satisfaction to tough decision-making. And we look ahead, having

learned those lessons, with some expectation that it can continue. We will continue to make tough decisions. We will continue to keep this economy robust. We will continue to show fiscal discipline. We will continue to be sure that regardless of what else we do, when we invest in our future, when we invest in our children, when we invest in the things that our people care so much about, that we make those investments good by paying for them. First, by protecting Social Security; second, by paying off some of the debt; third, by investing in things that are totally paid for with offsets that are real and calculable.

Mr. President, if that isn't a recipe for success, I don't know what is. I hope all of us, Republicans and Democrats, can acknowledge the importance of maintaining that success as we go forward. I noted that yesterday marked the first day of the debate of the 1999 budget. While we can debate a lot of things, I hope several things are off the table. I hope we don't go back to the old mistakes we made in the 1980s. I hope that we recognize that rosy scenario has no place in budget calculations any longer; that we have to ensure that the fiscal discipline and the leadership that we have demonstrated persists and can consistently be demonstrated through the decisionmaking process we make on the budget this year.

(Mr. ROBERTS assumed the Chair.)

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I wonder if the Senator from South Dakota will yield.

Mr. DASCHLE. I am happy to yield to my colleague.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I know the Senator comes from a reasonably small town in South Dakota. I come from a much smaller town in North Dakota.

I have said on several occasions that in my hometown, like most hometowns, we have a couple of people who get up in the morning and go down to the bar and play pinochle all day. They are retired. They sit around and play pinochle and enjoy life. The fact is, they sit around and play pinochle and complain while other people are out doing other things, like figuring out how to pave Main Street. Almost nothing satisfies them. There are people like that in every hometown, and there are people like that in Congress. The fact is, there is no amount of good news that can satisfy the people who are bent on having a bad day. I find it interesting that we went through part of the eighties and some of the nineties going in the wrong direction, and everyone was standing up and saying, "Gee, we were right on course; the deficit was continuing to escalate, the Federal debt was continuing to grow and mushroom." Everybody said, "Well, we're right on course." But we weren't on course.

The Senator from South Dakota, I know, understands well the 1993 vote. In that vote, we on this side of the

aisle said, "Wait a second, this train is running right down the wrong track. We are going to stop it, back it up, turn it around and move it in the other direction." That is what has gotten us to the point we are at today, where instead of seeing escalating budget deficits and mushrooming Federal debt, we are seeing exactly the opposite. We not only see reduced deficits, and a reduced debt burden, but also an opportunity, even as we balance the budget, to invest in critical things that are important to the future health of the country. Is that how the Senator sees it?

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I appreciate the observation made by the Senator from North Dakota. That is true. There are some people who, given the kind of cards we have been dealt, you think would find some cause for optimism with all the good that is happening today: housing starts the highest they have been in history; the number of new jobs the highest they have ever been; the strength of the economy; the low interest rates; the fact that we are going to see a surplus; a growth in the economy that exceeds that of Europe and Japan together. That remarkable economic success ought to be cause for optimism for even the most ardent political pessimists sometimes found among our colleagues on the other side.

So I acknowledge, as you do, that it is a remarkable day when, even with all of this good news, there are still some people who are trying to find the dark lining in the cloud.

There isn't much dark lining there. If we stick to the text that we have been using for the last 5 years, there is a lot of silver lining upon which we ought to be building our future.

Again, I appreciate very much the Senator's leadership in bringing this to the attention of the American people and helping us as we make these tough decisions each and every day.

Mr. President, I know others are seeking time for the floor. So, again, I thank the Senator for allocating this time for discussion of the budget and our current circumstances. I yield the floor.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, let me continue for a couple of moments to finish the presentation I was intending to make.

The reason I come back to the 1993 vote is that it was so controversial and so difficult for so many people. There were people here who said, "If you do this, if you pass this bill that makes a fundamental change in fiscal policy, you are going to cause a train wreck and you are going to run this country into a depression." We had people say that on the floor of the Senate. I won't read their quotes because that would not be fair. That was the intention of some folks on the floor, to say this is a terribly wrongheaded policy and going in the wrong direction. It turns out it was very important we change the direction of this country; it was the right policy.

When President Clinton proposed this budget, he talked about saving Social Security first. This is another way of saying we ought to pay down some of this debt. The problem has been that the Social Security trust funds have been used in the operating budget. I have been on the floor repeatedly talking about how inappropriate that is.

We ought to not step back into the same old hole we have been in for a decade and a half, or even more. We ought not to decide, the minute the budget picture looks better and we are headed in the right direction, that we are going to provide more tax breaks or more spending. What we ought to do is provide some confidence to the American people that we can manage this country's fiscal policy in a way that provides balanced budgets far out into the future. This President has done that in a way that says we are going to establish the right priorities for this country's future.

I want to mention two of them because others will come and talk about different portions of this budget. I want to talk about two. Some of the things the President has proposed represent additional investment in certain kinds of activities, and he has achieved that by reducing spending in other areas. I want to mention a couple.

Head Start. Does anyone in this Chamber who has visited a Head Start center believe that that is not the best kind of Federal investment we can make in young lives? Does anybody believe that program doesn't work? All of the evidence suggests that it is a wonderful investment in young lives. You go there and look in the eyes of these young children, 4- and 5-year-old children who are getting an opportunity in Head Start that they wouldn't have had otherwise. It yields tremendous rewards in the lives of each and every one of them.

When someone says, as we have seen in the past, "Well let's cut the budget and cut 60,000 kids out of Head Start," I say, "You tell me their names, which kids do you want to cut out of Head Start?"

This President says, and I hope this Congress will agree, that program works, that program makes sense, that program improves young citizens' lives. That's why his budget proposes to increase Head Start funding by \$309 million in the coming fiscal year.

Let me make one final point. There is a lot in this budget that makes a lot of sense. The National Institutes of Health. This President says let's do what we ought to do. Let's increase spending of the National Institutes of Health, and he does so in a way that gets NIH funding to \$20 billion in 2003, up nearly 50 percent over the coming 5 years, by achieving savings in other parts of the budget.

But I want to tell you briefly what they are doing down there at NIH. They have 50,000 plants, shrubs and trees from all around the world they collected with USDA, and they are

doing research. I encourage all my colleagues to go see what they are doing.

Contemporary medicine derives many of its drugs from plant sources all around the world. They are doing an investigation of chili peppers—chili peppers. Do you know what they are finding? Chili peppers have a pain-killing extract. People knew that in folk medicine long ago, but now it is being refined and used.

Sweet wormwood, a plant that has potency against malaria.

The willow tree, aspirin. The Chinese knew that 2,000 years ago. The java devil pepper, a drug used as hypertensive agents against high blood pressure. Rose periwinkle, used in Hodgkin's disease, anticancer agents. Foxglove, used in congestive heart failure.

The point is, go down and look at what they are doing and what we are getting for this investment. It is going to improve the lives of people in this country because it will lead to significant medical breakthroughs. And this is just one part of their research, in the area of evaluating plants, trees and shrubs all around the world for what folk medicine used to understand they can contribute. We are understanding in a more significant and sophisticated way that these natural resources can help people live a healthy life.

Go over to the Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and take a look at what they are doing with respect to heart disease and genetic research. It is possible some day in the future that someone whose arteries become clogged will have their body grow a new artery link around that blockage. That comes from genetic research.

My point is, that is an area of the budget that I am very excited about. Gosh, that makes a lot of sense because that is an investment in the future, that is an investment that is going to help this country and all people of the world.

I think it is exciting that we can come to the floor of the Senate at a time when the country is headed in the right direction. We have more jobs, more opportunity, more confidence in the future. The things that were troubling us—inflation, welfare, budget deficits, unemployment—are all of them down, down, way down. That ought to give cause for optimism to all Members of the Senate. And it should give the American people the confidence that finally we are moving in the right direction.

That is why this budget document is important. It sets out some priorities. Are some of them maybe adjustable? Are some of them wrong? Yes. Are a lot of them right? Yes. Let's have a debate about that, and let's describe and select those priorities that we believe will strengthen and improve this country.

I am happy to yield such time as he consumes to the Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from North Dakota for this opportunity to speak.

I came to Washington 15 years ago to be a Member of the House of Representatives. I can recall that one of the major items that we discussed in the entire 14 years that I served was the budget deficit. It seemed like such an impossible, intractable problem. Through President after President, we had these theories on how we were finally going to reach balance.

Oh, there was this steely resolve from everyone that we are going to get it done, and it seemed to be an elusive target that we missed year after year after year. As the balanced budget effort failed, the debt of the Nation grew and our deficits grew. We continued to shell out millions and millions and billions of dollars in interest on the national debt, money wasted that couldn't be spent for other good purposes.

Thank goodness we are in a different era. I pick up the morning paper and see the President of the United States has submitted to Congress for the first time in over 30 years a balanced budget. I read as well the last balanced budget submitted by President Lyndon JOHNSON was the result of a substantial tax surcharge which was imposed on the American people. So this President has brought us to a point with a balanced budget without this increase in taxes on working families, but giving us, I think, a better opportunity in the future.

How did we reach this point? I think you have to go back at least to 1993 when we passed the budget of the President. A Democratically controlled Congress, with not one Republican vote in support, passed a budget which moved us substantially toward a balanced budget.

It said that in the outyears, we would reduce spending, we would make certain that our books would be in balance, and then, to give credit where it is due, with the Republican Congress, just this last year, we came together again and, on a bipartisan basis, finished the job, finished that last important but small piece that needed to be added to reach balance. Add that to our bustling and thriving economy, and we have a situation that all of us can finally take pride in that we have a budget that is balanced for America and is balanced in its priorities.

Speaking to that budget, my friend from North Dakota mentioned several areas that are near and dear to my heart. The whole concept that we would finally find the resources in this budget to help working families pay for child care is one that is long overdue. During the break that we just completed, I traveled the length and breadth of Illinois visiting child care centers, seeing what was going on in the small communities and large cities of my State.

I can tell you, it is heartening, it is encouraging—but there are many challenges there—to go to St. Vincent de Paul Child Care Center in the city of Chicago and find 400 children in a very

positive, warm and safe environment and to know that those children are receiving the very best care. But then I hear from Sister Katie that there are, in fact, a thousand more children waiting to come to that center. Where are those kids today? Who is watching them? What are they learning? Is it good or bad?

The President's budget says let's start providing more money for families to pay for child care, and he issues the resources from the tobacco agreement—one that I think should be one of our highest priorities this year. If we leave town in 1998, if this Senate and House leave town without enacting tobacco legislation—a tobacco agreement, a comprehensive approach—we will have turned our back on a golden opportunity for families across America to help pay for child care.

In the area of medical research, it always puzzled me that this area of research, which is so popular among the American people, didn't receive the kind of investment that it was due. I will give credit where it is due, within the last year or two my colleague from Illinois, Congressman JOHN PORTER, and others, have moved forward to increase NIH funding.

We can do better. We can do more. With this tobacco agreement and the proceeds from it, through this budget, we will finally start making the kind of investment in health research which every family cares for. Now, people may not come up on the street and say, "Senator, I hope you will do something about health research," but I say just visit a hospital. Visit a hospital where some family member is seriously ill and sit around for a few minutes, and you know what they will say. "I hope that the people working in Washington and all across the country can help spare my family or at least some other family what we have gone through with this health problem."

The last point I will make is critically important. There is a lot of talk about what to do with our surplus. There is kind of a surreal quality to this—a surplus? It was just a year ago that if you came to the floor of this U.S. Senate you would have found several Members—one parked at this desk right over here—with a stack of books higher than his head, all the budgets that have been submitted that were not in balance. And what was his suggested solution and the solution of many of my colleagues? An amendment to the Constitution.

It is fortuitous that on the floor waiting to speak next is Senator ROBERT BYRD. Senator BYRD of West Virginia has led the fight against this notion for a long, long period of time. Senator BYRD will recall the speeches, "If we don't amend this Constitution, if we don't put a balanced budget amendment in the Constitution, we will never reach balance. We have to change the Constitution." Senator BYRD had the wisdom and the leadership to stand up and say, "You are

wrong. This can be done with political will. It need not be done by changing the Constitution of the United States."

Here we are 12 months later, I say to the Senator. I don't hear the hue and cry on the floor anymore from our friends on the other side of the aisle about amending the Constitution. They pick up the paper in the morning and say, "You've reached a balanced budget." We didn't have to put that travesty in our Constitution. I think there is a lesson there. We certainly owe a great debt of gratitude to Senator BYRD for his leadership in reminding us that we ought to step back and take a look at the course of American history before we jump and run and add things to that great document.

Now today, I say to the Senator, there are people who say we don't have to worry about the deficit anymore, our biggest problem is trying to figure out how to spend this surplus. All this extra money, what can we do? Can we declare a dividend for the American people? Give them tax breaks and become the most popular politicians in a generation? I suppose we could do that, but I think that is shortsighted. We don't know where this economy will be 6 months or a year from now. We don't know where Federal revenues will be. It is far better for us to take a cautious course.

I think President Clinton was right in his State of the Union message. Our first stop on that course should be Social Security. Let's make certain that if there is a surplus that we can count on, that we invest it back into Social Security so that it is there not just for generations to come but for the next century. We can do that, and we can do it if we don't rush to judgment here, if we don't spend this phantom surplus, if we don't overinvest.

As we were caught up a year ago in the idea of amending the Constitution, let's not get carried away in 1998 with overspending this surplus that may be illusory or only temporary.

I stand today happy that this administration has brought forth the first balanced budget in 30 years, but understanding that within that budget are important priorities for the working families of America, priorities which will never see the light of day unless this Senate and the House of Representatives work together to make certain that we keep your eye on the goal. The goal is making sure that we have a better standard of living for families across America.

I thank Senator BYRD for giving this opportunity to speak and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from West Virginia is recognized.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the very distinguished Senator from Illinois. He is an extremely able Senator and he is focused on the betterment of the country and always with the interests of the people of his State uppermost in mind. I am glad to serve with him.

## ISTEA

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, there is an urgent necessity for the Senate to turn immediately to the consideration of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1997, ISTEA. That is the highway bill. That bill was reported unanimously by the Environmental and Public Works Committee on October 1, 1997. However, due to our inability to enact a comprehensive 6-year ISTEA reauthorization bill at the close of the last session, our State highway departments and transit providers are currently operating under a short-term extension bill that provides roughly one-half year of funding which is needed for our Federal highway construction, our highway safety, and our transit programs.

That short-term extension bill, Public Law 105-130, signed by the President on December 1, 1997, includes the following text, and I hope that Senators will listen carefully:

A State shall not obligate any funds for any Federal aid highway program project after May 1, 1998.

Let me repeat this provision that was in the law enacted and signed by the President on December 1 of 1997. Listen to these words:

"A State," that is my State, the State of the distinguished Senator who presides so efficiently over this Senate, that is the State of each of 99 other Members, "A State shall not obligate any funds for any Federal aid highway program project after May 1, 1998."

That is just 42 legislative working days away—42 days.

I want to take a moment to explore the practical impact of that sentence. That sentence means that on May 1 of this year, just 87 days from today, with just 42 legislative calendar days—session days, we might say—away, our State highway departments and our transit providers across the Nation will be prohibited, by law, from spending any Federal highway or transit trust fund dollars. This provision does not apply just to the funding that was part of the short-term extension bill; it applies, equally, to any other unobligated funds that States may have left in their accounts for highway or transit projects currently in progress.

Mr. President, this provision, prohibiting the obligation of highway or transit funds after May 1, is a doomsday provision. It is a provision that says, beginning 3 months from this past Sunday, all 50 States in the union will begin to hit the same brick wall and feel the same pain—the pain of a Federal highway program coming to a halt, the pain of workers being put on the unemployment line, the pain of urban mass transit projects stopping in midstream, the pain of gravel quarries shutting down, the pain of construction equipment manufacturers closing their doors, the pain of our citizens sitting in ever-worsening traffic jams due to the inability to progress on desperately needed projects, the pain of unnecessary accidents and deaths on

our highways—all of these because those roads cannot be brought up to modern safe standards. Make no mistake about it, May Day, May the 1st, May Day, will certainly elicit a cry for help from our States and our people.

You will hear the Governors, you will hear the mayors then, you will hear the highway agencies then, from all over this country.

Mr. President, when the Congress put that doomsday provision into law, we did so at a time when the Senate majority leader was telling the Senate that we would turn to a comprehensive 6-year ISTEA reauthorization bill as our first order of business early in the second session of the 105th Congress. Back in November we knew that, if we took up the ISTEA bill at the end of January, we would have sufficient time between then and May 1 to move an ISTEA bill and go to conference with the House and present a completed bill to the President for his signature. It was an ambitious schedule, but it was achievable.

Mr. President, today, that picture appears to have radically changed, and it does not appear that we will be taking up the highway bill any time soon. I say this from the inferences that I draw from newspaper reports and the reports that I receive by word of mouth and various other communications, electronic and so on. There are exceedingly few legislative days available to us prior to May 1, as I have already indicated, about 42 session days. I am not counting Saturdays and Sundays. These are session days. Although the priorities of the Senate leadership may have changed regarding debating ISTEA, the doomsday date of May 1 remains in the law. While it may be the desire of the Senate leadership to debate a budget resolution prior to the consideration of ISTEA, let's realistically face what that means. While the law requires that the Senate pass a budget resolution by April 15, the fact is that we miss that deadline far more often than we meet it. And if we just listen to the statements that have been made in the last few days regarding the President's budget, it is apparent that the debate over the substance and the direction of the budget resolution promises to be a long and contentious one.

So what is the real possibility of our enacting a comprehensive 6-year ISTEA reauthorization bill prior to May 1, if we do not turn to it immediately? Not good, at best.

Mr. President, some observers have looked at the calendar and concluded that the Senate, along with the House, will just have to pass another short-term ISTEA authorization bill. Well, Mr. President, I am not a member of the Environment and Public Works Committee. But, I am told by both the chairman and ranking member of that committee's Surface Transportation Subcommittee that the chances are very slight, indeed, that we will be successful in, again, passing a short-term